

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07

L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

ACDA-05 NIC-01 SAJ-01 OMB-01 /074 W

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R 281828Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8353

INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN

USMISSION USBERLIN

AMCONSUL BREMEN

AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, GW

SUBJECT: THE STRUGGLE FOR THE CDU/CSU CHANCELLOR  
CANDIDACY

REF: BONN 1891

BEGIN SUMMARY: THE JOCKEYING FOR TACTICAL ADVANTAGE  
IN THE COMPETITION FOR THE CDU/CSU CHANCELLOR CANDI-  
DACY BECAME MORE ACTIVE FOLLOWING A SUGGESTION BY THE  
CSU TO POSTPONE MAKING THE DECISION  
UNTIL NEXT FALL. CDU CHAIRMAN KOHL, VICE CHAIRMAN AND  
RIVAL STOLTENBERG AS WELL AS SECRETARY GENERAL BIEDEN-  
KOPF QUICKLY REJECTED THE CSU SUGGESTION AND REAFFIRMED  
THE CDU'S INTENTION TO REACH A DECISION  
BEFORE THE JUNE 23 CDU  
PARTY CONGRESS. END SUMMARY

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1. THE CSU SUGGESTION FOR POSTPONING THE CHANCELLOR

CANDIDATE DECISION WAS PROPOSED IN A FEBRUARY 23 RADIO INTERVIEW WITH THE BAVARIAN REPRESENTATIVE IN BONN, HEUBL. HE SUGGESTED THAT THE DECISION BE POSTPONED TO THE FALL WHEN ECONOMIC AND FOREIGN POLICY DEVELOPMENTS THAT WILL AFFECT THE 1976 ELECTIONS WOULD BE MORE CLEAR. HEUBL ALSO DEFENDED THE DELAY BY CLAIMING THAT ALL THE POTENTIAL CANDIDATES WERE WELL KNOWN TO THE PUBLIC AND IT WOULD NOT REQUIRE A YEAR AND A HALF TO BUILD A PUBLIC IMAGE FOR THE UNION CANDIDATE.

2. THE CDU SUSPECTED THAT HEUBL'S SUGGESTION WAS A PLOY BY THE CSU TO FORESTALL THE NOMINATION OF EITHER KOHL OR STOLTENBERG AND TO HOLD OPEN THE POSSIBILITY OF AN EVENTUAL STRAUSS CANDIDACY. THEIR SUSPICIONS WERE CONFIRMED BY STRAUSS' REFUSAL TO REFUTE HEUBL AND THE CDU LEADERSHIP QUICKLY AND PUBLICLY REJECTED THE SUGGESTION.

3. IT IS NOT CLEAR YET WHAT THE PROCEDURE WILL BE FOR CHOOSING THE CDU/CSU CANDIDATE. ONE POSSIBILITY IS THAT ONE INDIVIDUAL WILL EMERGE CLEARLY AS THE LEADING CANDIDATE AND BUILD A CONSENSUS AMONG THE LEADERSHIP WHICH WOULD BE RATIFIED AT THE PARTY CONGRESS IN JUNE. ANOTHER POSSIBILITY WOULD BE TO CONVENE A SPECIAL GROUP (POSSIBLY MADE UP OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES OF THE CDU, THE CSU AND THE CDU/CSU BUNDESTAG FRAKTION) TO CHOOSE THE UNION CHANCELLOR CANDIDATE BEFORE THE CONGRESS MEETS. IN SUCH A GROUP THE CSU WOULD BE OVERREPRESENTED IN COMPARISON TO PARTY MEMBERSHIP STRENGTH BUT THERE WOULD STILL BE A 2:1 CDU ADVANTAGE.

4. THE MAJOR ACTORS IN THE DRAMA ARE AWAITING THE RESULTS OF THE LAENDER ELECTIONS IN KOHL'S RHEINLAND-PFALZ (MARCH 9) AND IN STOLTENBERG'S SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN (APRIL 13) AS A BAROMETER OF THEIR RELATIVE VOTE GETTING ABILITY. THERE IS CONSIDERABLE OPTIMISM IN MAINZ THAT KOHL WILL MAKE AN EXTREMELY STRONG LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SHOWING, AND THAT COMBINED WITH HIS

STATUS AS NATIONAL CDU CHAIRMAN WILL INSURE THAT HE BECOMES THE UNION CANDIDATE. ON THE OTHER HAND, AS ONE LEADING CDU POLITICIAN AND SUPPORTER OF KOHL POINTED OUT TO AN EMBASSY OFFICER, A STRONG SHOWING BY KOHL WOULD LIKELY STIR STOLTENBERG'S SUPPORTERS TO EXTRA EFFORTS IN SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN AND

THE ELECTION RESULTS COULD CANCEL EACH OTHER OUT.

5. WHAT IS FRANZ JOSEF STRAUSS' GAME? SOME CDU  
LEADERS ARE STILL NOT CONVINCED THAT AT THE END OF  
THE DAY STRAUSS REALLY WILL SEEK THE CANDIDACY BECAUSE  
HE KNOWS HOW DIFFICULT IT WILL BE FOR HIM TO BEAT  
HELMUT SCHMIDT, ESPECIALLY WHEN STRAUSS WOULD LEAD A  
PARTY THAT WOULD BE DIVIDED OVER HIS CANDIDACY

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AT THE SAME TIME THE POSSIBILITY OF A STRAUSS CANDIDACY  
IS MORE SERIOUSLY DISCUSSED IN TOP PARTY CIRCLES THAN  
IT HAD BEEN IN THE PAST.

6. CONTRIBUTING TO THE DISCUSSION IS THE APPEARANCE  
THROUGHOUT THE FRG OF POSTERS SHOWING AN ENORMOUS  
PICTURE OF STRAUSS WITH THE SLOGAN "GER-  
MANY, YOUR FUTURE." WHILE THE POSTERS APPEAR SIMILAR  
TO CAMPAIGN POSTERS, THEY ARE, IN FACT, ADVERTISE-  
MENTS FOR A SERIES IN THE SPRINGER-OWNED "BILD AM  
SONNTAG". HOWEVER, ONE HAS TO HAVE EXCELLENT EYE-  
SIGHT TO READ THE LINE ADVERTISING THE SERIES. CRITICS  
WITHIN THE CDU BELIEVE THE POSTERS ARE AN ATTEMPT BY  
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SPRINGER TO BOOST THE STRAUSS CANDIDACY. WHATEVER  
THE PRO-STRAUSS TACTICS ARE, SOME CDU MEMBERS BELIEVE  
THAT IF THE CSU IS SUCCESSFUL IN POSTPONING A DECISION  
AS TO THE CHANCELLOR CANDIDACY UNTIL THE CDU PARTY  
CONGRESS JUNE 23-25 (AT WHICH THE CSU WILL NOT BE AN  
OFFICIAL PARTICIPANT) THERE WILL BE A MOVE AT THE  
CONGRESS TO FORCE THE ISSUE AND NOMINATE EITHER KOHL  
OR STOLTENBERG AS THE CANDIDATE OF THE CDU AND THUS  
PRESENT STRAUSS WITH A FAIT ACCOMPLI.  
HILLENBRAND

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